1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

565 main bridge between Turk and Arab. Old-fashioned Muslims
647 or cynical free-thinkers, xenophobe or professedly cosmopolitan,
every type was to be found in their ranks. Barely literate, per-
661 sistent Turkish-speakers, backward but decorous in social habit, uniform in their travesty of European dress, too frequently corrupt and remote from all spirit of public service, they identified the body politic with their own class, contemptuous of tribe and cultivator. Ill-paid and ambitious, they could not prudently rely on merit alone; nepotism was rampant, no intrigue or appeal neglected. The civil service of 'Iraq in 1900 must, by any save contemporary Asiatic standards, rank low; yet it contained, at all levels and all times, not a few honest and high-minded men.

631 The division of Turkish provincial territory into wilayas, sanjaqs, qadhās, and naḥiyas is familiar. The administrative units corresponded generally to no geographical divisions, and were often ill conceived. Changes of status and boundary and the creation of new units were not uncommon. The 'Iraq of 1900 showed, in all, four fewer sanjaqs than there were liwās in 1950, a score fewer qadhās, two score fewer naḥiyas. Qadhās were graded as first, second, and third class; they differed no less in size, population, and administrative difficulties. Some were suburban, others wholly tribal, others, such as Razaza or Kuwayt, no more than nominal. Walis and Mutaṣarrifs were appointed by imperial decree, lesser administrative officials locally by the Wali. Frequent
662 repostings and dismissals reflected an uneasy underworld of intrigue and tale-bearing, and were fatal to continuity.

The Wali as the representative of the Sultan dealt with the heads of local communities, foreign consuls, and the greater tribal chiefs. The general and non-departmental administration was in his hands. He directed the municipalities, 'settled' tribal disputes which defied settlement, heard multifarious grievances, and through the Daftardar influenced or controlled the all-important field of land
[623] revenue. At every wilaya and subordinate headquarters sat an Administrative Council composed partly of officials, partly of elected members who included Christian and Jewish representa-
625 tives. The maintenance of law and order depended upon the Gendarmerie—the *Zaptié* familiar to European travellers. This force, organized and commanded on military lines, was administered by the War Office but placed at the disposal of the local Government. Ill-paid and greedy, half-equipped and unkempt and used for every purpose of escort, message-carrying, and even domestic service, the *Zaptié* yet lacked neither loyalty nor hardi-
631 hood, and did much or most to keep the administration in being.
647 Over many of the departments operating in his area, the local

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642 therefore, nor to any Western observer did it occur in 1920 not to install the forms of government both familiar at home and seemingly demanded in 'Iraq. Nevertheless, this most exacting of constitutional forms was now seen to be acclimatizing itself in 'Iraq with difficulty and with mixed immediate results. If it is true that the virtues of the system are everywhere appreciated, and no better alternative has been discovered by the modern world, yet, to be in fact representative and democratic, it demands certain conditions. 181 Did these exist in 'Iraq? There was, certainly, a long Arab tradi- 665 tion of tribesmen's democracy and easy access to rulers. Free 204 speech, a vigorous and copious press, busy parties, 'demonstrations' in every street and school: all these could be claimed as democratic features of Baghdad life. But with what truth? The press was ill informed, irresponsible, rabidly partisan, crudely xenophobe. The demonstrations were organized, easily and cheaply, at any politician's direction. The parties were, so far, mere cliques of personalities, without continuity or breadth of organization or any consistent policy unless that of mere Anglophobia. Freedom of speech was allowed to extreme, rarely to moderate, views; violence or boycott awaited the exponent of any policy, however wise or sincere, if it seemed to fail in nationalist fervour. It was indeed doubtful whether one educated 'Iraqi in a hundred conceived society on truly democratic lines or, given power, would have wished so to organize it. Their nature was individualistic and insubordinate, their tradition authoritarian, and the conditions in 646 their society inimical to democracy. The representatives in the 666 Chamber itself were in fact selected less by the votes of an instructed electorate, which did not exist, than by the nomination of the Cabinet in power; the list conveyed to the Mutaṣarrifs as that of Government-sponsored candidates was, with infrequent exceptions, that of the Deputies.

642 It resulted that in 1932 the Government of 'Iraq consisted of 662 a façade of democratic forms behind which, emerging from the stresses, strains, and violences of faction and egoism, operated the actual power of a small ruling class: a class which contained on the one hand more than enough figures capable of filling the ministerial posts available, but on the other too little variety of viewpoint to compete for power by the advocacy of genuinely alternative programmes. The result was an uneasy shuffle of offices, short-lived Cabinets with a brief innings for everybody, and the fortunes of Ministries dependent not on the attitude of representative Deputies capable of a gesture of dismissal, but on personal faction behind their backs. It was already clear that if ever the only authoritative hand not involved in these uneasy intrigues should be removed—that of the King—there would be opportunity, or almost inevita-

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bility, for some other power to intervene with decision; a part which, in the event, was to be that of the Army.

It may be asked, would a frankly authoritarian government—dictatorship, acknowledged oligarchy or mere Arab patriarchy—have been preferable? It would in all likelihood have been still less acceptable to its public than the pseudo-democracy actually imposed; the procedures of democracy, however ill conducted, were at least educative and might later show a narrowing gulf between form and spirit. Even a semi-nominated Chamber contained enough of intelligence, experience, and public spirit to be a valuable deliberative and critical body; politics and press at least provided an arena of action for the intelligentsia, whose suppression would be dangerous as well as improper. The only alternative to 'democracy' might well prove to be a tyranny oppressive within and, by its probable international adhesions, dangerous without. 'Iraqi political history for the ten years following its achievement of independence was to be one of the alternation in short cycles of the imposition and the relaxation of authority: the former accompanied by protests and violent intrigues against 'slavery', the latter always abused by licence turning to anarchy.

There was reference above to a ruling class. In fact, claimants to leadership were more than one, and their claims if permitted could be scarcely consistent with a democratic régime. In tribal society the position of the shaykhs, with all their intestine rivalries and schisms, was still unchallenged though no longer State-sponsored. Among the Shi'i population, and especially among the tribes of the Euphrates, the influence of the 'Ulamā was still considerable and rarely exercised in the direction favoured by Government. Officialdom, an alternative source of leadership and itself a main social element, was now broadened by full admission of the Shi'is, and its standard of education, conduct, and efficiency had risen markedly since Turkish times; but nothing in its position or allegiances could lead it to a sense of solidarity with the masses. The same is true of the non-official part of that important middle class whose upper edges touched the ministerial, the lower the proletariat class, and which included the lawyers, students, journalists, doctors, superior shop-keepers, commercial employees, higher technicians, middlemen, and ex-officers. Extending from bare literacy to some learned pretensions, the class was self-conscious as the evolved and progressive element in their country; but it was frustrated by lack of active outlets in public life and especially by failure to break into the ruling circle. From it were arising, already before 1932, the new politicians and publicists. Not without quick intelligence and shrewdness, and often effective